MR. GLADSTONE'S STUDIES OF THE FUTURE LIFE.

DURING the memory of the present generation anything written by Mr. Gladstone has been greeted as an important literary event, and will doubtless continue to be so greeted as long as the greatest statesman, and one of the greatest scholars of his age continues to write.

And age and failing powers seem still far distant, judging from the advance sheets of his forthcoming work, which the Macmillan Company will publish toward the last of the week, its publication in England having taken place a few days earlier.

The "Studies" are subsidiary to the works of Bishop Butler, and the author follows his subject with all the logical clearness and directness that characterize his style. But it is Mr. Gladstone—not Bishop Butler—whom the reader is conscious of and interested in, and the only feeling of dissatisfaction arises from the subordination of the writer to his theme. The most interesting portions of the work are therefore those in which the author gives expression to views and thoughts other than mere criticism, as, for example, when he speaks concerning that subject which is more interesting than any other to every reflective soul—the Future Life:

"I shall offer one general remark, which appears to me to be of weight. There are two compartments, so to speak, in the vast regions spread out before us, which appertain to the future of the righteous and and the unrighteous, respectively. With regard to the first, men have been content to leave it in the main much as the received it from our Lord and the Apostles, and have respected the declaration that 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard.'

"But there has been an activity certainly remarkable, perhaps in part feverish and morbid, in exploring the domos Ditis vacuas et inania regna, and where the New Testament was sparing or silent, it has been bold, eager—nay even dogmatic. This thirst for information on punishments, as to their nature, the classes who are to undergo them, and their duration, does not seem to be founded on the persuasion that there, beyond the grave, is our home, and that, as if it were an earthly home, we desire to know all we can about it.

"Anxiety has taken the same direction in dogmatic and in anti-dogmatic times, but for different reasons. It is not now sought to alarm men by magnifying the power of God and by exhibiting the strictness and severity of the law of righteousness. The anxiety now is to throw these subjects into the shade, lest the fastidiousness of human judgment and feeling should be so offended as to rise in rebellion against God for His harshness and austerity. That this motive is entertained in good faith, need not be doubted. But the result in practice is that we seem to call the Almighty to account, and undertake, on the foundation of our own judgment, to determine what He can or cannot do, because we have concluded that He ought or ought not.

"For those who reflect on what God is and what we are, it will be evident that this is, to say the least, most dangerous ground to occupy. And propositions growing out of our unwarranted assumptions are tendered to us for acceptance with a confidence, which ought only to be felt when our reason is acting within its own province, and in the measure of our own powers. . . . .

"And now, when every one is competent or accustomed to speculate upon everything, it is little or less surprising that the average human mind should instinctively recoil from opening out a volume which beats the roll of Jeremiah in the wofulness of its contents, and which the New Testament seems rather to aim at keeping closed. Again, as to the conception itself of immortality in eternity, where are we? With all our labor to enlarge our conception relatively to its subject, it remains as small as ever. No addition adds to this eternity, no subtraction reduces it.

"In such imperfect vision of it as by the utmost effort we can entertain, it is so vast as to paralyze, almost to crush, our feeble intellects. Their failure would be more keenly felt, were we duly grounded in the habit of pondering the words we use, and measuring their true weight and force. I will give one final indication of the manner in which the human race has shrunk abashed for so long a time from the microscopic enlargement of this conception.

"One of the mightiest intellects it has produced was that of Dante; and, in the first division of his great work, he might seem almost to have been driven upon its detailed consideration. And yet he has avoided all attempts at detailed consideration of the nature of eternity. He uses the word eternal in the Inferno but twelve times (its derivatives making no sensible addition), and uses it almost exclusively as to the region, hardly ever in relation to a soul, always as a simple epithet without exposition or illustration.

"From detail and development of duration he altogether abstains; and it is observable that in the Inferno of Dante there are no infants. But how large a space the question of man's condition in a future life occupies on the field of human interests cannot, I think, be more pointedly shown than by reference to a remarkable bibliography lately published which (terminating in the year 1878) contains the titles of over six thousand separate works."

In an exceedingly interesting manner the author then goes on to trace the influence exercised by Butler over British thought, and to discuss his share in causing the reaction in favor of belief which marked the second half of the eighteenth century.

"I say upon British thought," writes Mr. Gladstone, "because it cannot be pretended that he then became, or that he has yet become, an appreciable factor in forming the thought of Continental Europe. . . . . Down to the present day experience has assured us only of his hold upon communities of British blood. . . . Thought has been powerfully affected in England within the last sixty years by the successive influences of Coleridge, of Mill, and (in a somewhat different sphere) of Carlyle; and it is safe to say that our country underwent great elevating influences from Scott and from Tennyson.

"But, excepting that Newman had occasion for a personal purpose to bear strong witness in the case of Scott, how far could any of these influences be adequately verified by direct evidence drawn from our general literature, or from any positive record? . . . . Lord Chesterfield was a man of extraordinary talents, for his own day the veritable king among men of the world, of whom life is built up with an infinity of care and skill upon well-organized, though worldly, self-love and consummate enjoyment of the world; with no negation of religion, but with no interest in it; with a toleration of it, conditional upon its abiding peaceably in its own place, as a hat abides in the hall until it is wanted for going out of doors. Such is his habitual strain.

"And yet when he was becoming not an old, but, according to the ideas of those days, an elderly man, we find him writing from Bath, under date of November 11, 1752, with regard to benefit which his physician promised him from the waters, in the following terms: 'As I do not expect it, if I receive it, it will be the more welcome. If not, I have both philosophy and religion enough to submit to my fate without either melancholy or murmur.

"'For though I can by no means account why there is either moral or physical evil in the world, yet, conscious of the narrow bounds of human understanding, and convinced of the wisdom and justice of the Eternal Divine Being who placed them here, I am persuaded that it is fit and right that they should be here.'"

In discussing Butler's comparative modernity, in comparing him with the ancients, Mr. Gladstone says: "To give delight to the average unsophisticated man was what Homer could venture to prescribe to himself as the proper office of the bard. Butler is not a bard, but a philosopher. He does not conform to this condition; and man at large has in these last three thousand years travelled far from the early simplicity of his nature. It is not only that nature has become less simple.

"It has also become more profound. Christianity has penetrated more deeply into the essence of man than any agency previously offered to his mind; it has opened up in him new depths; it has added to him a new intensity. . . . . And if we compare the developments of character in practice, as known in the ancient pre-Christian world, and that which Christianity has so insufficiently but yet marvellously permeated, we shall be astonished at the difference.

"Every vice and every virtue has altered in its character, is a larger and a deeper thing. The ancients lived more on the surface; we have dug deep into the subsoil. The cruelty of Christians is more cruel. Of this fact, at first sight so startling, we have recently had a very striking illustration in the singular elaboration of those horrible instruments of torture, of which there was a remarkable exhibition in London a few years ago.

"To the ancients, the arts of torture were little known; and the legend of Regulus holds a solitary place in their popular literature. The lust of Christians is more lustful, and carries with it, as to acts which may be the same, the consciousness of a much deeper sinfulness; for, as Butler is careful to instruct us, moral acts can only be estimated aright when taken in conjunction with the nature and capacity of the agent.

"Antiquity has displayed for us in its records all the worst that it had to say of itself, in this painful chapter of the experience of the race, and has done it with a certain naivete. It has been of a surety entirely outstripped in the performances of the Satanic schools, under the earlier and later conditions respectively.

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Many readers will respond to these concluding words of the "Grand Old man": "I suppose that most of us, if thinking at all upon the coming condition of our companion pilgrims who precede us on their passage into the shadows of death, must think, upon a survey of the field of our experience, that they defy in innumerable cases our feeble powers of estimation. I mean those cases in which some real form of goodness seems to have a real, perhaps a strong and permanent hold, but where it has taken conscious and deliberate effect in full conformity to the Divine will.

"Take for example the instances in which, apart from any distinct self-devotion to God, life has been principally or systematically spent in the endeavor to diminish human suffering; and this, perhaps, with the exercise of much active renunciation and self-denial. Or, again, where it has been similarly given to that improvement of the temporal conditions of human life, which, in a greater or a less urgent degree, the majority of our fellow-creatures, or at the very least a large portion of them, appear to need. Or, again, where men apply their thought and means not to the indulgence of their appetites, but to the improvement and expansion of their own powers for purposes of eventual utility.

"In all these schemes for bettering God's world, regard to the Lord of that world, and humble dependence on his power and benediction, ought to have their proper place; which by the supposition has not, or not in due measure ,been given to it. Or let us turn our view to another and extended category of those classes who embrace the Divine word with what they think to be an entire willingness, nay, with a sanguine exultation.

"I do not now speak of the modes in which this state of mind may be contaminated by a self-confidence in utter antagonism to the true life of the Gospel, but to the more, simple, less entangled case where the broad propositions of religion are accepted, but accepted too near the surface, without measuring them against the entire thought, life and purpose of the man, so that they are but partially applied, and allow of the retention of this or that habit which either falls short of, or even is on its own ground in obvious conflict with, the laws of the Divine life."

These citations may possibly convey some impression of the character of Mr. Gladstone's forthcoming work, but only the deliberate, reflective reading of it in its entirety can do justice to its profound thought, its great beauty, and its permanent value as a contribution to the vast library of soul-yearnings.

A POWERFUL NEW NOVEL OF PROVINCIAL IRISH LIFE.

SEVERAL novels of Irish life recently published in England have attracted so much attention as to constitute something like a new movement in literature.

The latest, and perhaps also the finest, of these studies of provincial Ireland is "Across an Ulster Bog," written by M. Hamilton, and issued by Edwin Arnold. It is superior to the others of its kind in characterization, while quite equal to them in local color.

The characters that stand out most distinctly are a clergyman—it should be borne in mind that these sketches deal exclusively with Protestant Ireland—and a girl of his parish. Of the preacher, the story says:

"One of his fellow-students had laughingly accused him of living the life of an old woman. What it cost this coarse-blooded, passionate young Southern peasant so to live only he himself knew—the struggles with his temperament at every step, the many pleasant sins which tempted him almost beyond endurance. But there was no medium for him, and he knew it; the stern life to which he condemned himself was his only safeguard.

"Without friends or interest, a character to which the most censorious could take no objection, was his only way toward the object which had become almost a monomania. This was a desire for social advancement. He might have had a cheerful life enough if he had been content to associate with the farmers around, but this he would not do."

So it came about that he lived apart from all classes, and the life was a terribly lonely one. And after a time he could not endure it. Nature, especially strong, coarse nature, that is close to the soil, and has little uplifting intellectuality, will find an outlet, and the Rev. Samuel Duffin is drawn to Ellen Lindsay as irresistibly as the tides are influenced by the moon. The relation between them is revealed by an accidental meeting which takes place early in the story.

"When Ellen had been called out to say good-by, and Miss Baring had whistled to her setters and disappeared down the lane, a long pause fell between the other two.

Mr. Duffin played with his stick as if his chief object in life was to make it draw an exact circle in the mud; from time to time he gave rapid, half stealthy glances at the girl.

"'Ellen,' he said softly.

"Ellen drew her breath sharply.

"'I'm skeared at your coming.'

"'Nonsense; it's safe enough—there's no fear.'

"'I've black fear at my heart. There's no call for you to come; it's a foolishness.' There was a hurry in Ellen's soft voice; she looked round her nervously and the color came and went in her face.

"Mr. Duffin went closer to her, and laid his hand roughly on her arm.

"'Meet me this evening, then,' he said, and she interrupted with a sharp cry of pain.

"'No, no, no! Didn't you give me your solemn word'—

"'I can't keep it.'

"The two stood looking in each other's faces in a moment of silence; then Ellen drew back, quivering and hiding her face from what she saw in his eyes.

"'I don't care what I promised—you must come.'

"Ellen's words came in hurried, passionate appeal, with sudden pauses where her breath failed her. 'I couldn't do it, sir! For God's sake, don't ask me—till I try to be a good girl—but I can't be—never, never again!'

"'Don't be a little fool!' said Mr. Duffin hoarsely. 'I tell you I can't stand much of this. Ellen'—

"The girl recoiled in sharp terror.

"'Don't come near me. I wish I was dead. God forgive me! For your own sake and mine, go away, sir. There'd be murder done if my father or the boys'—

"'I'll go, if you'll meet me this evening'—

"'I can't, I can't, I can't—God help me!'

"Ellen broke into bitter weeping, but she would not yield. Mr. Duffin tried passionately with rough words to beat down her resistance. He was excited beyond his own control, and almost forgot his fear of observation—almost, but not entirely. * * * He let go his hold of her arm and pushed her from him roughly, with a coarse word of reproach:

"'You little devil, do you want to drive me mad?' he said. 'You are setting up to be particular—a trifle late.'

"Ellen watched him, as he made his way hastily down the lane, with vague, almost indifferent eyes. It was impossible that it was to her, Ellen Lindsay, that this thing had happened, that her life was spoilt just as she was coming to the full enjoyment of it. She felt in a strange way outside herself, as if it was another person she pitied—another poor girl for whom she was so sorry that sharp, painful tears sprang to her eyes! It could not be herself."

Until this man had crossed her humble path the girl's life had been blameless.

"Ellen was exceedingly capable of taking care of herself with young men of her own class; she held her head high and kept them at a distance. But when the minister—the minister who preached to her in church and taught her in Sunday-school—who sometimes went to have his dinner at 'the Castle,' and talk to Miss Nelly on terms of equality—when he began to notice Ellen a little more than the rest, she was pleased and flattered.

"Never for an instant did she think of herself and him as woman and man till he absolutely forced her to think. Then, in a whirl of vanity and bewilderment, it seemed to her now, she had for a time lost her senses, and lived without thought, in a mad, hidden excitement. She had been proud—yes, proud—of her conquest of this demi-god, who left Miss Nelly to come to her. To Ellen he was the handsomest, most fascinating, most irresistible person in the world, and she was a girl to feel the full influence of difference of rank.

"Only lately the shame had broken upon her and crushed her to the earth.

"She did not distinctly blame any one. In her class no question of equal morality for men and women had ever been raised. A girl who did not know how to take care of herself was a fool, and worse.

"Men were—as God made them."

But on this desolate Irish bog an ignorant peasant is struggling with one of those problems which baffle all learning and all civilization. Ellen Lindsay was uttering the bitter cry that has been wrung from many women of greater wisdom and higher degree: "It was unbearable, unbearable. She was a wicked girl, and God punished the wicked; but she would be good—so very good—if she could have another chance—just one more chance; she had been such a child, and so foolish before. Was it just to let her spoil her whole life before she understood what she was doing? Was it just to leave her hopeless at sixteen? And all she wanted must be such a little thing to God—just one more chance."

Just that one more chance which is never given.

With this as the central situation the story revolves around the preacher and the girl. Driven to desperation by threatened exposure, she makes a last appeal to him. It comes at a good time. He is smarting under the neglect of the Castle family, which had stung him anew that very day. Since the doors of society were closed against him, why not be happy in another way? Ellen had lost none of her beauty.

"A thought that had already come into his mind once or twice flashed back again. Why not ease his conscience—end this lonely life—make himself safe? Ellen was as sweet and dainty as any lady, and in another parish—.

"The two were together, completely alone, shut in to a warmth and comfort which went to his head like intoxication. The rain drove sharply against the window, bringing with it a stray leaf, which tapped so humanely against the glass that he started.

"Ellen stood looking into the fire with the face of one who expected nothing more of life. The temptation to bring the old sparkle to her eyes and the old smile to her lips overcame him.

"He filled a glass of water and drained it. Then he drew close to her and let his hand fall warmly on hers.

"'Ellen,' he said, hoarsely. His voice breaking the silence sounded strange to himself. 'Ellen—shall we be married?'

"The words were said—half against his own will and intention they were said.

"Ellen turned on him in a flash.

"'Oh!' she said, breathlessly. 'Oh'—

"'I mean it; I swear to you'—

"She caught him up passionately.

"Mind what you say—mind what you say! I'm—I'm not sure that I rightly understand'—

"'I am going to marry you.' As Mr. Duffin repeated the words they seemed all at once unbearably compromising and ruinous and unnecessary.

"Ellen's whole face was drawn together in an effort to be quite sure.

"'Say it again, slow. I've maybe took you up wrong. Did you say you would be willin'—to—marry me?'

"'Yes.'

"She turned such a ghastly white that for a moment he thought she was going to faint; but instead she burst into a very storm of weeping."

The description of the happiness and perfect trust with which the girl sets off next day to walk to the town where Duffin has promised to meet and marry her, and where she meets with nothing but disappointment, misery and disgrace, is one of the fine points of the book. From this time on the story gathers tragic intensity. The scene wherein Duffin is forced by the church members, who have no suspicion of the truth, to visit the wretched girl, to speak with her touching her sin, recalls "The Scarlet Letter," with a vast moral difference in the men.

"'It is a late visit,' said Mr. Duffin, trying to get the words carelessly from between his dry lips. His eyes seemed drawn in spite of himself to Ellen and the cradle, from which came a faint and intermittent cry. Ellen's eyes were on the ground; she stood between her baby and him like a guard.

"Mrs. Mawhinney, seeing the initiative left to her, was quite equal to it.

"'His reverence is come to spake a word of seasonable reproof, and to say that you've a right to spake out, Ellen. He's about to tell you that it's your duty to fasten the sin where it belongs. Isn't that so, sir?'

"Mr. Duffin sought for words to qualify the statement. 'I hardly feel I have the right'—

"'And who would have a better right than the minister of God in her own parish? Maybe, if she gave his name, words from one who is an example to all the young parish might move the sinner to do all that's left in his power and marry her. Spake out, sir; she will hearken to you.'

"Mr. Duffin's words came in a stutter.

"'What Mrs. Mawhinney says is doubtless right'—

"Ellen raised her eyes slowly and faced him. Such a look of reproach and scorn that he shivered before it.

"Lindsay broke in while he tried to regain the thread of his words:

"I hope your reverence will take it as it's meant, but I wish things let alone. The harm's done, and I'm overly willing to see to her and the child. I wouldn't have help from rascal like thou if he went on his bended knees and prayed me to. So if your reverence would kindly talk of aught else.'

"But Ellen spoke in a strange voice:

"'I would ask, does he want me to say the man's name?' she said.

This would seem the natural climax of the story, but it is not. The web of deceit is woven stronger and stronger, and the plot deepens up to the final tragedy, which is so awful that no feeling of justification can lift the horror.

N. H. B.

Lafcadio Hearn, Now a Naturalized Jap, in Native Costume.

LAFCADIO HEARN'S PROPHETIC NEW BOOK ON JAPAN.

THE prospective industrial rank which Japan promises to take is a matter of the intensest interest to modern progress. We, therefore, turn to the latest book of Lafcadio Hearn, which he calls "Hints and Echoes of Japanese Inner Life," with the expectation that it will throw some light upon this strange people, their methods and their possibilities.

Mr. Hearn has thrown off American allegiance and has become a naturalized citizen of Japan. His name in the language of that country is T. Koizumi, partaking of the family name of his wife. The photograph on this page shows him in the native costume. The other picture is that of T. Koizumi, Jr., son of Lafcadio Hearn and his Japanese spouse. He is three years old, and he is to be reared and educated as a Japanese pure and simple.

This author acknowledges the sudden development to the Western sense of Japanese power in its conflict with China, but he asks where are the outward material signs of that immense new force that she has been showing both in productivity and in war, and he answers the question in one word—nowhere. He has lived with the people, communed with them, so to speak, and he certainly sympathizes with them in their religion no less than in their domestic customs and habits, and after a long experience he says there is no sign anywhere of a sudden upheaval of new power, either in her intellectual or her industrial life. She nowhere exhibits what the Western eye is always looking for, namely, largeness and permanence.

Everything in Japan strikes the Western eye as being impermanent. Nothing seems to be contrived or constructed for durability. The straw sandals worn out and thrown away at each stage of the journey, the robes consisting of a few simple widths loosely stitched together for wearing and unstitched again for washing, the fresh chopsticks served to each new guest at a hotel and then thrown away, the light shoji frames of their houses serving at once for windows and walls and repapered twice a year, and the mattings renewed every season, are random examples of the national contentment with impermanency.

Mr. Hearn then proceeds to review the peculiar history of industrial Japan in our own day. He points out that at the first contact with Western civilization the import and export trade fell entirely into foreign hands, and in those hands grew from nothing to hundreds of millions in value. Concessions had been made to English merchants and they had everything their own way. The rapid growth in wealth of the ports and immense capital successfully invested by these foreigners in business slowly proved to the patient Japanese how much they had to learn before they could compete with the Western merchants and capitalists.

They settled down to labor and to wait. They traded with the foreigners or worked for them while secretly detesting them. In old Japan, the merchant had ranked below the common peasant, but these foreign merchants were princes. They built palaces of stone and brick, instead of bamboo.

Within two decades from the founding of the foreign settlements these foreigners, who once thought it was only a question of time when they would own the whole country, began to understand that they had underestimated the patience and shrewdness of the Japanese. They had been learning wonderfully well. They were supplanting the small foreign shopkeepers and various establishments had been compelled to close because of Japanese competition.

In the early days all the personal wants of foreigners had necessarily been supplied by foreigners, so that an immense retail trade had grown up among them under the patronage of the foreign wholesale trade. All that has been quietly changed. The era of easy fortune making among these foreigners was over. The period of hard work was commencing, for they were competing with a people who had caught their trick. To-day, the foreign clerk or assistant in a business house can no longer afford to live at the local hotel and put on foreign airs. If he lives in a house, it is owned by Japanese. He has to attend strictly to his duties or a Japanese as clever as he will be hired at less money. All his furniture, even to the mattings on his floor, are made by Japanese. His clothes, shirts, shoes, walking cane, umbrella of English cut and make are made better by the poor Japanese round the corner and sold for less money than the importer charges. The very soap on his washstand has the Japanese trade mark.

If he is a smoker he buys his Manila cigar from a Japanese tobacconist half a dollar cheaper per box than any foreign house would charge him for the same quality. If he wants books, he can buy them at much lower prices from a Japanese than from a foreign book dealer. If he wants a photograph he must go to a Japanese gallery, for no foreign photographer could live for a moment in competition with these fellows. If he is a man of family his daily marketing is now supplied by Japanese butchers, fishmongers, dairymen and vegetable dealers, who give him everything that he could get in his own country.

If he have a taste for English and American hams, bacon and canned goods, he very quickly discovers that the Japanese merchant can offer him these goods at lower prices than his own countrymen. If he drinks beer it now comes from a Japanese brewery as good as he can get in Germany, and at a lower price. If his family is sick, he can consult a Japanese physician, educated in Philadelphia or in London, who will charge him just one-half what the English or American resident physician will exact. Nor can the foreign physician compete with him in cutting down his fees, for the Japanese physician owns his own drug store round the corner.

With these conditions in view, it is manifestly impossible for Western civilization to make any industrial headway in Japan or to gain dominant foothold on the soil, unless it abandons its own racial instincts and adopts the economy, the patience and the self-sacrifice which are so repugnant to its instincts and training. To all this must be added, Mr. Hearn says, a race antagonism that foreign invasion of Japan has only intensified. The real sentiment of the country is Japan for the Japanese. The people tolerate and imitate foreigners, but never affiliate with them. The barriers of racial feeling—of emotional difference—are likely to remain insurmountable for centuries.

NYM CRINKLE.